

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01
CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00 EB-08 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-01
INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05
USIA-06 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 EA-10
FRB-03 IO-13 NEA-10 OPIC-03 LAB-04 SIL-01 AGRE-00
NRC-05 /150 W

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P 191343Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7345

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USOECD

E.O. 11652:N/A
TAGS: ENRG, OECD
SUBJECT: OECD/NEA RESPONSE TO US PROPOSAL ON INTERNA-
TIONAL FUEL CYCLE EVALUATION (INFCE)

REF: STATE 184505

1. SUMMARY. NEA DIRECTOR GENERAL WILLIAMS HAS RESPONDED
TO US PROPOSAL PER REFTTEL, STATING NEA WILLINGNESS TO
SUPPORT THE PROGRAM, SUBJECT TO FORMAL APPROVAL OF NEA
STEERING COMMITTEE. IN AN ATTACHMENT HE SUMMARIZES
PRESENT NEA PROJECTS THAT ARE OF RELEVANCE TO
THE US PROPOSAL. TEXTS OF HIS LETTER OF AUG 17 AND OF
ATTACHMENT ARE GIVEN BELOW IN PARAS 2 AND 3 RESPECTIVELY.
END SUMMARY.

2. TEXT OF LETTER. QUOTE. DEAR DR. PACKER. AS AGREED ON
THE TELEPHONE, WE HAVE CONSIDERED THE CURRENT DRAFT
TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR
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FUEL CYCLE EVALUATION (INFCE) AND HAVE BEEN STRUCK BY
THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE ONGOING PROGRAMME OF NEA IS
RELEVANT. I ATTACH A BRIEF SUMMARY TO ILLUSTRATE THIS.
CLEARLY, NONE OF THE PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES WILL WISH
TO DUPLICATE THE EFFORT ALREADY UNDERTAKEN AND, SUBJECT
TO THE FORMAL APPROVAL OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR
NUCLEAR ENERGY, WE SHALL BE GLAD TO DO EVERYTHING POSSI-

BLE IN SUPPORT OF THE PROPOSED INTERNATIONAL WORKING GROUPS AND SUBGROUPS.

INDEED, WHILE WE FULLY APPRECIATE THE GENERAL PHILOSOPHY OF THE PROPOSED ORGANIZATION OF INFCE, IT OCCURED TO US THAT THE COMMERCIAL AND OTHER INTERESTS INVOLVED IN THE SUBJECT MATTER OF CHAPTER 1 ARE SUCH THAT IT MAY PROVE DIFFICULT TO FIND A LEAD COUNTRY WITH BOTH THE NECESSARY INSIGHT INTO THE PROBLEMS INVOLVED AND A DISINTERESTED STANCE. THIS MIGHT SUGGEST THAT, FOR CHAPTER 1, AN APPROPRIATE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION SHOULD BE DESIGNATED TO PROVIDE THE LEAD; IF THIS IS AGREED, WE SHOULD BE GLAD TO SEEK THE APPROVAL OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR NEA TO ASSUME THIS ROLE.

AS I MENTIONED ON THE TELEPHONE, THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS MATTER IS SUCH THAT I SHOULD WISH MYSELF TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROPOSED CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON. IF, AS IS EVIDENTLY HOPED, THIS CAN TAKE PLACE BY MID-OCTOBER, IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR US TO SEEK THE APPROVAL OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE AT ITS MEETING OF 26TH-27TH OCTOBER FOR THE CONTRIBUTION ENVISAGED BY NEA. YOURS SINCERELY. I.G.K. WILLIAMS. END QUOTE.

3. TEXT OF ATTACHMENT. QUOTE. INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE EVALUATION PROGRAM (INFCEP). RELEVANCE OF THE ONGOING PROGRAM OF NEA. CHAPTER 1. A. ESTIMATES OF THIS NATURE HAVE FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN THE NEA PROGRAM FOR LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MANY YEARS. A LONG TERM STUDY ON FUEL CYCLE REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPLY IS CURRENTLY IN FINAL DRAFT FOR PUBLICATION IN LATE 1977. TO MEET THE NEED FOR SHORTER TERM ESTIMATES ACCORDING TO VARIOUS HYPOTHESES CONCERNING NUCLEAR POWER GROWTH AND POWER REACTOR STRATEGIES, IT IS PLANNED TO DEVELOP A DATA RETRIEVAL SYSTEM BASED ON EXPERIENCE DERIVED FROM THE LONG TERM FUEL CYCLE STUDY AND SIMILAR WORK IN MEMBER COUNTRIES. B. THERE IS A LONG TRADITION, IN COLLABORATION WITH IAEA, FOR REGULAR ASSESSMENTS (ON A FREE WORLD BASIS) OF URANIUM AVAILABILITY. A NEW REPORT IN THE SERIES IS BEING PREPARED FOR PUBLICATION BEFORE THE END OF 1977. ALTHOUGH NEA HAS NOT BEEN DIRECTLY CONCERNED WITH MARKETING POLICIES, INCREASING ATTENTION IS BEING GIVEN TO URANIUM EXPLORATION TECHNIQUES AND EVALUATION OF URANIUM RESOURCES IN HITHERTO UNEXPLORED AREAS. A FIRST COMPREHENSIVE EVALUATION OF WORLD POTENTIAL FOR ADDITIONAL URANIUM RESOURCES SHOULD BE AVAILABLE EARLY IN 1978 AND BE ACCOMPANIED BY SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES, INCLUDING FIELD INVESTIGATIONS IN AREAS OF THE GREATEST RESOURCE POTENTIAL. C. HEAVY WATER AVAILABILITY HAS NOT BEEN SPECIFICALLY CONSIDERED BUT CAN EASILY BE EMBODIED INTO EXISTING MECHANISMS, IF DESIRED.

D. GIVEN THE LIMITED INTEREST TO DATE, THORIUM AVAILABILITY HAS BEEN MENTIONED INCIDENTALLY IN THE URANIUM

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REPORTS MENTIONED UNDER B. CHAPTER 2. ENRICHMENT NEEDS AND AVAILABILITY ARE COVERED IN THE LONG TERM FUEL CYCLE STUDY MENTIONED UNDER CHAPTER 1.A. COMPARISON OF THE PROLIFERATION RISKS OF THE VARIOUS ENRICHMENT TECHNIQUES HAS NOT BEEN CONSIDERED BY NEA. CHAPTER 3. THIS AREA HAS NOT BEEN CONSIDERED BY NEA. CHAPTER 4. A. THE ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL, PLANT SAFETY AND WASTE MANAGEMENT ASPECTS OF REPROCESSING HAVE BEEN KEPT UNDER CONTINUING REVIEW BY NEA (LEADING, FOR EXAMPLE, TO PUBLICATION OF A REPORT ON REPROCESSING IN OECD COUNTRIES EARLY IN 1977). CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO THE TIMING OF NEW SIMILAR ANALYSES, ACCOUNT BEING TAKEN OF ALTERNATIVE FUEL CYCLE CONCEPTS AND OF DEVELOPMENTS IN REPROCESSING TECHNOLOGY. THIS WORK AND NEA'S LIAISON WITH THE EUROCHEMIC COMPANY HAVE PROVIDED THE BASIS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE IAEA STUDY FOR REGIONAL FUEL CYCLE CENTRES. FINALLY, CONSIDERATION IS BEING GIVEN, IN THE GENERAL CONTEXT OF FUEL CYCLE SAFETY RESEARCH (AND WITH DUE REGARD TO RELEVANT WORK ELSEWHERE) TO TECHNO-

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LOGICAL METHODS OF PROTECTING FISSIONABLE MATERIALS AGAINST DIVERSION. B. PRIORITY IS BEING GIVEN, WITHIN THE NEA PROGRAM RELATING TO QUESTIONS OF RADIATION PROTECTION AND PUBLIC HEALTH, TO A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF THE SAFETY AND REGULATORY ASPECTS OF THE PRODUCTION AND USES OF PLUTONIUM. THE INITIAL TARGET IS TO PUBLISH LATE IN 1978 OR EARLY IN 1979 A REFERENCE SOURCE ON THE BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL BEHAVIOUR OF PLUTONIUM AND SOME OTHER TRANSURANIC ELEMENTS. C. THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF RECYCLING PLUTONIUM IN THERMAL REACTORS ARE REFERRED TO IN THE LONG TERM FUEL CYCLE STUDY (SEE CHAPTER 1.A. ABOVE). THIS WORK COULD EVIDENTLY BE DEVELOPED, IF REQUIRED. CHAPTER 5. THE ECONOMIC AND ENERGY ASPECTS OF FAST BREEDERS ARE COVERED BY THE LONG TERM FUEL CYCLE STUDY MENTIONED PREVIOUSLY. THE SAFETY ASPECTS, PARTICULARLY OF SODIUM-COOLED FAST REACTORS, ARE AN IMPORTANT CONTINUING ELEMENT IN THE PROGRAM OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE SAFETY OF NUCLEAR INSTALLATIONS (CSNI). CHAPTER 6. A SEMINAR WILL BE ORGANIZED IN 1978 ON THE STORAGE OF SPENT FUELS, COVERING NUCLEAR SAFETY, TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC ASPECTS. THIS WILL RECEIVE HIGHER PRIORITY IN THE GENERAL FIELD OF WASTE MANAGEMENT STUDIES, WHILE PARTICULAR ATTENTION WILL BE GIVEN UNDER CSNI TO THE SAFETY PROBLEMS OF SPENT FUEL STORAGE AND, IN PARTICULAR, TO FUEL DEGRADATION DURING LONG TERM STORAGE. CHAPTER 7. NOT COVERED BY NEA. CHAPTER 8. THROUGH ASSOCIATION WITH THE DRAGON PROJECT, NEA HAS ALWAYS TAKEN A CLOSE INTEREST IN THE POTENTIAL FOR HIGH TEMPERATURE REACTORS AND HAS CONTINUED AS CUSTODIAN OF THE DRAGON PROJECT'S ARCHIVES. SINCE 1971 NEA HAS MAINTAINED A CO-ORDINATING GROUP ON GAS-COOLED FAST REACTOR DEVELOPMENT, NOW INVOLVING PARTICIPATION BY 10 COUNTRIES (INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES), THE COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES AND THE GAS

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BREEDER REACTOR ASSOCIATION, WHICH BRINGS TOGETHER INDUSTRIAL FIRMS INTERESTED IN THIS REACTOR CONCEPT. THE CO-ORDINATING GROUP IS WELL PLACED TO ASSESS THE POTENTIAL OF THIS REACTOR CONCEPT. END QUOTE.

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Message Attributes

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